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PAGE 01 SEOUL 10210 281020Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-25 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00  
SSO-00 USIE-00 INPF-00 OMB-01 /050 W

O P 280946Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIAC IMMEDIATE 1247

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

CINCPAC HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PINT KS US

SUBJ: MEDIA HANDLING OF PAK TONG-SON CASE, ET AL; 12/28  
1. ALL AFTERNOON VERNACULAR PAPERS DECEMBER 28 CARRY MAJOR  
HEADLINES AND EXTENSIVE FRONT-PAGE STORIES CONTAINING DETAILS  
OF "PENDING PROBLEMS" BETWEEN ROK AND U.S. WHICH PRIOR  
COVERAGE HAD ONLY HINTED. THREE ISSUES ARE: ALLEGATIONS  
CONCERNING ACTIVITIES OF PAK TON-SON, STATUS OF KIM SANG-GUN,  
AND ALLEGED BLUE HOUSE BUGGING. ALL NEWSPAPERS RAN FULL  
TEXT OF STATEMENT OF FOREIGN MINISTER ON FRONT PAGE, NEXT  
TO OWN STORIES AND PHOTO OF PAK TONG-SON. INSIDE, PAPERS  
RAN ALMOST VERBATIM TEXT OF MUCI "REFERENCE MATERIALS"  
PREPARED FOR FIRST MEETING OF NEW PEACEFUL UNIFICATION  
COUNCIL (PUC) OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (NA) AND ALSO RELEASED  
TO NEWSPAPERS DECEMBER 28.

2 FRONT-PAGE STORIES EXPLAINED THAT PRIME MINISTER  
AND MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CULTURE AND INFORMATION,  
AND NATIONAL UNIFICATION BOARD HAD APPEARED BEFORE PUC.

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MAIN STORIES MOSTLY REHASHED FOREIGN MINISTER'S PRESS  
RELEASE. ADDITIONAL STORIES GAVE CONTENTS OF RESOLUTION  
ADOPTED BY PUC, GENERALLY SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT'S  
EFFORTS SO FAR. INSIDE STORIES ACCOMPANYING "REFERENCE  
MATERIAL" (WHICH WAS UNATTRIBUTED AND RUN AS GENERAL  
BACKGROUND) GAVE CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT  
OF ALL THREE ISSUES.

3. PAPERS ALSO REPORTED ON FRONT PAGE COMMENTS OF A  
FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE THAT (A) USG INVESTIGATION INTO  
PAK TONG-SON CASE WILL CONTINUE, AS WILL DISCUSSIONS  
BETWEEN ROK AND U.S.; (B) HIGH LEVELS OF U.S. STATE  
DEPARTMENT HAVE SEVERAL TIMES DENIED, IN BOTH SEOUL AND  
WASHINGTON, THE (ALLEGED) BLUE HOUSE BUGGING OPERATION;  
AND (C) THERE HAS BEEN NO EXCHANGE OF EITHER MEMORANDA OR  
RECORDS OF AGREEMENT REGARDING THE PROBLEMS PENDING  
BETWEEN ROK AND U.S. SAME SOURCE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT  
STORIES HAD NOT BEEN CARRIED IN KOREAN PRESS UNTIL NOW:

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PAGE 1

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(A) LEST DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH U.S. BE AFFECTED.  
(B) BECAUSE GROUNDLESS FOREIGN REPORTS MIGHT STIMULATE  
NATIONAL SENTIMENT (U.S. NOT MENTIONED), AND (C) BECAUSE  
WE SHOULD NOT GIVE NORTH KOREA A CHANCE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE  
OF THIS AFFAIR.

4. AS YFT, THERE HAVE BEEN NO EDITORIALS ON THIS  
SUBJECT.

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PAGE 2

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